

2025 HPCAI Legislative Priorities



Hospice & Palliative Care
ASSOCIATION OF IOWA



Guardianship and hospice

Per Iowa law, if a patient has a guardian, the guardian must petition the court for additional rights as the patient's health status changes. This law includes gaining court approval to change a patient's status from full code to "do not resuscitate" or to enter the patient into end-of-life care.

This process often results in significant stress to families and patients because the patient can die before the court approves the update to guardianship responsibilities. The patient's death then may lack the peace and dignity it could have had. The Hospice and Palliative Care Association of Iowa understands and supports careful consideration when it comes to the responsibilities of guardians but urges the legislature to enact an expedited process for guardianship rights changes.

The general assembly should support legislation allowing a patient's guardian an expedited process to be granted permissions for end-of-life care by the courts.





Hospice services provided under the medicaid program

Hospice providers struggle with the administrative complexities of implementing Medicaid managed care organizations in Iowa. These complexities include continued inconsistent and inaccurate payments for Medicaid claims, changes to managed care organization reimbursement guidelines and inconsistent policies and practices for prior authorizations.

During the 2022 legislative session, the legislature considered and passed legislation strengthening Iowa's Medicaid program while creating a more efficient system. The bills included supporting providers when prior authorizations were approved and ensuring coverage when a patient is Medicaid-eligible. The Hospice and Palliative Care Association of Iowa was grateful for these bills and supports the legislature's continued work on this, including considering legislation for reducing the recoupment timeline of overpayments and easing the credentialing process.

The general assembly should ensure managed care organizations pay claims timely and consistently, update Medicaid rates and ease administrative burdens for providers.

Workforce initiatives

Hospice and palliative care organizations are facing critical health care workforce shortages. Organizations struggle to recruit, hire and maintain medical professionals and staff in most hospice and palliative care roles. Staffing shortages leave hospice and palliative care providers with no choice but to deny new patients.

The general assembly should ensure hospice and palliative care organizations have resources available, especially during this time of dire need and urgency, by:

- Eliminating unnecessary restrictions prohibiting health care professionals from efficiently engaging in Iowa's workforce.
- Expanding training programs statewide.
- Increasing reimbursements for Iowa providers to ensure Iowa is competitive in recruiting and retaining talent.
- Investing in workforce initiatives that provide incentives to Iowa health care professionals.

